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U.S. PATENT & TRADEMARK OFFICE  
Applicant(s) or Patentee(s) Richard K. Bolen  
Serial or Patent No.: 09/954,771  
Filed or Issued: September 18, 2001  
For: "SECURE MERCHANDISE VENDING MACHINE"

Attorney's  
Docket No.: 072395.00003

VERIFIED STATEMENT (DECLARATION) CLAIMING SMALL ENTITY STATUS  
(37 CFR 1.9(f) & 1.27(c)) - SMALL BUSINESS CONCERN

I hereby declare that I am

the owner of the small business concern identified below:  
 an official of the small business concern empowered to act on behalf of the concern identified below:

NAME OF CONCERN THE NORTHWESTERN CORPORATION  
ADDRESS OF CONCERN 922 East Armstrong Avenue  
Morris, IL 60450

I hereby declare that the above-identified small business concern qualifies as a small business concern as defined in 13 CFR 121.12, and reproduced in 37 CFR 1.9(d), for purposes of paying reduced fees under section 41(a) and (b) of Title 35, United States Code, in that the number of employees of the concern, including those of its affiliates, does not exceed 500 persons. For purposes of this statement, (1) the number of employees of the business concern is the average over the previous fiscal year of the concern of the persons employed on a full-time, part-time or temporary basis during each of the pay periods of the fiscal year, and (2) concerns are affiliates of each other when either, directly or indirectly, one concern controls or has the power to control the other, or a third party or parties controls or has the power to control both.

I hereby declare that rights under contract or law have been conveyed to and remain with the small business concern identified above with regard to the invention entitled: "SECURE MERCHANDISE VENDING MACHINE"  
by inventor(s): Richard K. Bolen  
described in

the specification filed herewith  
 application Serial No. 09/954,771, filed September 18, 2001  
 Patent No.       , issued       

If the rights held by the above-identified small business concern are not exclusive, each individual, concern or organization having rights to the invention is listed below and no rights to the invention are held by any person, other than the inventor, who would not qualify as an independent inventor under 37 CFR 1.9(c) or by any concern which would not qualify as a small business concern under 37 CFR 1.9(d) or a nonprofit organization under 37 CFR 1.9(e). NOTE: Separate verified statements are required from each named person, concern or organization having rights to the invention averring to their status as small entities. (37 CFR 1.27).

NAME  
ADDRESS

INDIVIDUAL  
NAME  
ADDRESS

SMALL BUSINESS CONCERN

NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION

INDIVIDUAL

SMALL BUSINESS CONCERN

NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION

I acknowledge the duty to file, in this application or patent, notification of any change in status resulting in loss of entitlement to small entity status prior to paying, or at the time of paying, the earliest of the issue fee or any maintenance fee due after the date and which status as a small entity is no longer appropriate. (37 CFR 1.28(b)).

I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code, and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application, any patent issuing thereon, or any patent to which this verified statement is directed.

NAME OF PERSON SIGNING: Richard K. Bolen  
TITLE OF PERSON OTHER THAN OWNER: President  
ADDRESS OF PERSON SIGNING:       

SIGNATURE

Richard K. Bolen

DATE

11/15/01